



IS IT SAFE?

Bologna

SOLO TRAVELER SAFETY GUIDE

SAFETY GUIDE SERIES

Overall Safety Assessment

RATING: Safe — a low-violent-crime university city; standard vigilance for pickpocketing near major landmarks and around the station at night.

Bologna is one of Italy's safer mid-sized cities for tourists. The historic center benefits from nearly 40km of UNESCO-listed porticoes that keep pedestrian routes covered, lit, and well-trafficked, and the massive student population (80,000+) keeps streets socially active well past midnight — a genuine safety asset for solo travelers, since near-constant foot traffic reduces the isolation that opportunistic crime relies on.

The primary risk is pickpocketing near major landmarks (Piazza Maggiore, the Two Towers, Quadrilatero market) and at Bologna Centrale station, plus occasional bag-snatching by moped near Via Ugo Bassi. Crime data is moderate rather than low by strict numerical index, but the character of risk skews heavily toward petty theft rather than violent crime.

RATING SCALE

★★★★ = Very safe ★★★ = Safe ★★ = Use awareness ★ = Avoid at night ◻ = Avoid

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY

Neighbourhood Safety at a Glance

AREA	RATING	NOTES
Piazza Maggiore / Centro Storico	★★★★	Well-lit, actively policed, busy day and night.
University District (Via Zamboni, Piazza Verdi)	★★★★	Alive with students late into the night; crime low despite weekend bar chaos.
Quadrilatero Market	★★★★	Safe, but a documented pickpocketing hotspot during peak hours — keep bags zipped.
Porticoes (general, after midnight)	★★★	Shelter from rain but can feel isolating when foot traffic drops — stick to lit sections of major streets.
Bologna Centrale station area (night)	★★★	Rough sleepers, occasional aggressive begging — take a taxi if arriving late.
Bolognina	★★★	Higher crime rates, especially after dark — outside the standard tourist core.
San Donato / Navile	★★★	Developing areas with higher-than-average crime rates — not part of a standard 48-hour itinerary.

COMMON SCAMS & RISKS

Common Scams & Risks

Pickpocketing:

The most frequent issue, concentrated near Piazza Maggiore, the Two Towers, and the Quadrilatero market during peak hours, plus crowded buses (particularly Route 30 to the station). Keep bags zipped and in front.

Fake petitions / distraction scams:

Overly friendly strangers or fake petitioners near Piazza Maggiore and Via dell'Indipendenza can be a setup for pickpocketing. Decline and move on.

Fake police check:

Rare but reported — someone claiming plainclothes authority asks to inspect a wallet. Ask for official ID, or insist on being taken to the nearest questura (police station); real police won't object.

Bag-snatching by moped:

Reported near Via Ugo Bassi. Carry bags on the building side, not facing the street.

Tourist-trap restaurants near Piazza Maggiore:

Not dangerous, but a documented overcharging pattern — venture a few streets off the main square for better food at fairer prices.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

Health & Medical

Policlinico Sant'Orsola-Malpighi (main hospital, 24/7 ER)

Via Massarenti, ~1.5km east of Piazza Maggiore. Tel: +39 051 214 1111. One of Italy's largest hospitals, ranked among the country's top facilities.

Private walk-in clinics

Several along Via Emilia offer extended hours and English-speaking staff for non-emergency issues.

Anti-violence helpline

1522 — free, 24/7, multilingual.

Insurance note

Italy's public health system (SSN) treats emergencies regardless of insurance status, but repatriation and non-emergency private costs can be significant for non-EU visitors — comprehensive travel insurance with medical evacuation coverage is strongly recommended.

SOLO WOMEN TRAVELERS

Solo Women Travelers

Bologna is widely considered one of the best Italian cities for solo female travelers — the massive student population normalizes women walking alone, dining solo, and studying in cafés, and catcalling is generally less aggressive here than in some other Italian cities. The well-lit, well-trafficked porticoes make late-night walking routes genuinely safer than in cities without them. Standard precautions apply: stay in the Centro Storico for well-lit streets and constant activity, avoid Montagnola Park alone after dark, and be extra cautious around Bologna Centrale after 11pm — a taxi is the better call for late arrivals or departures.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency Contacts

SERVICE	CONTACT
Emergency (all services)	112
Carabinieri	112
Polizia di Stato	113
Ambulance	118
Anti-violence helpline (24/7, multilingual)	1522
Policlinico Sant'Orsola-Malpighi (24/7 ER)	+39 051 214 1111
Bologna Welcome tourist office	Piazza Maggiore 1